

In the Claims:

1. (Amended) A framework for a network management device, comprising:

an object repository having a set of at least one object class definition, each object class definition containing information needed to retrieve instances of an object defined by the corresponding object class definition and configured to maintain data regarding at least one managed device on a network;

an object manager configured to retrieve at least one object class definition from the object repository and initiate at least one class function of the retrieved objects to retrieve at least one class instance; and

an interface configured to retrieve data from the class instances and forward it to a user of the network management device;

wherein said object repository is configured to accept provider plug-in modules configured to hold at least one of said object class definitions;

the object manager is further configured to scan a provider list and recognize objects needed to fulfill data requests regarding remote network devices from a remote front end device;
and

the object manager is yet further configured to utilize multiple objects recognized from different provider lists and the interface to retrieve data to fulfill the data requests.

2. (Cancel)

3. (Cancel)

4. (Cancel)

5. (Amended) The framework according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the object class definitions include a proprietary communication routine configured to retrieve data from a data store located on a network.

6. (Original) The framework according to Claim 5, wherein said communications routine includes an IIOP communication protocol.

7. (Original) The framework according to Claim 5, wherein said data store is a proxy that collects said data from a network device.

8. (Original) The framework according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the object class definitions include a communication routine that uses any protocol to communicate with a network device to collect said data regarding at least one managed device on the network.

9 - 14. (Cancel)

15. (Amended) A method ~~of retrieving network management information~~, comprising the steps of:

receiving, at an object manager in a backend receiver, a data request related to network management information from a remotely located front end;

scanning a provider list;

recognizing a set of objects in the provider list needed to retrieve and reference the requested data;

determining ~~a set of information needed for network management~~ if the recognized set of objects have been instantiated at the backend receiver;

loading ~~at least one object~~ the set of objects, at least one having a class hierarchy and class routines capable of retrieving and maintaining the ~~needed network management~~ requested data, into an the object manager;

invoking class routines for retrieving ~~an instance~~ instances of the ~~object~~ set of objects;

retrieving the requested data from the object instances; and

forwarding only the ~~needed management~~ requested data retrived from the object instances to a user the remotely located front end.

16. (Amended) The method according to Claim 15, wherein said step of invoking class routines for retrieving comprises the steps of calling a set of framework provided mechanisms for communicating with a proxy to retrieve the ~~network management~~ requested data.

17. (Original) The method according to Claim 16, wherein said framework provided mechanisms comprises a set of IIOP communication programs.

18. (Cancel)

19. (Original) The method according to Claim 15, wherein:
said method is embodied in a set of computer instructions stored on a computer readable media;

said computer instructions, when loaded into a computer, cause the computer to perform the steps of said method.

20. (Original) The method according to Claim 19, wherein said computer instruction are compiled computer instructions stored as an executable program on said computer readable media.

21. (Original) The method according to Claim 19, wherein said computer instruction are compiled computer instructions stored as an interpretable program on said computer readable media.

22. (Original) The method according to Claim 15, wherein said method is embodied in a set of computer readable instructions stored in an electronic signal.

23. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein the recognized set of objects include objects recognized from different providers.

24. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein the backend includes a set of centralized routines available to provider plug-ins installed in the backend that enable communications between the backend and remote network devices having data needed for the recognized set of objects.

25. (New) The method according to Claim 24, wherein the centralized routines include communications routines for each of CORBA IIOP, at least one database protocol, and SNMP.

26. (New) The method according to Claim 24, wherein the centralized routines include communications routines for each of CORBA IIOP, SNMP, and at least one proprietary protocol.

27. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein said step of invoking comprises, passing the object instances to a remote network device; and invoking the class routines at the remote network device.

28. (New) The method according to Claim 27, wherein said step of passing comprises passing the object instances to the remote network device via CORBA IIOP.

29. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein said step of invoking comprises, passing the object instances to a plurality of remote network devices via CORBA IIOP; and invoking the class routines at the remote network devices.

30. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein said step of invoking comprises, invoking the class routines for retrieving instances of the set of objects at the backend; utilizing communication routines centralized on the backend to communicate with a plurality of remote network devices to retrieve data referenced by the object instances.

31. (New) The method according to Claim 30, wherein the centralized communication routines combine different protocols for communicating with different remote network devices, including at least one remote network device that communicates with the backend using OCRBA

IIOP and at least one network communication device that communicates with the backend using SNMP.

32. (New) The method according to Claim 30, wherein the centralized communication routines combine different protocols for communicating with different remote network devices, including at least one remote network device that communicates with the backend using CORBA IIOP and at least one network communication device that communicates with the backend using at least one database protocol.

33. (New) The method according to Claim 30, wherein the centralized communication routines combine different protocols for communicating with different remote network devices, including at least one remote network device that communicates with the backend using CORBA IIOP and at least one network communication device that communicates with the backend using at least one proprietary communication protocol.